

ARNOLD ARBORETUM HARVARD UNIVERSITY



BULLETIN OF POPULAR INFORMATION

SERIES 4. VOL. VIII

JUNE 28, 1940

NUMBER 6

SOME ROSE SPECIES

R OSES are too little used in our present day landscaping. There may be several reasons for this, but after a careful examination of the types available, one is not surprised to find that there are certain species which deserve a place in almost every garden. Attention is here called to some of the more outstanding rose species for use in modern gardens.

The exact number of rose species has been a much debated point for many years. In 1892 Gandoger recognized 4266 species, while a few years before Bentham and Hooker recognized only 30—a rather striking difference of opinion! Be this as it may, Professor Alfred Rehder suggests that there are probably between 150 and 200 species of roses in the temperate and subtropical regions of the northern hemisphere. On the basis of Rehder's estimate, it is of interest to note that over one half of these occur in the living collections at the Arnold Arboretum, and that one nursery (Bobbink and Atkins) has recently listed 93 species and botanical varieties as being grown by them and ready for sale in the form of two year old, field grown plants. With these figures as a background, let us examine some of the important reasons why more of these rose species should be grown in the garden.

In the first place, as these are the wild roses of the world, they are entitled to a place in any wild garden, in the woodlands or at the border of roadways and woods. Every wild garden typical of New England should have at least one plant of the beautiful Virginia rose which is so prominent along our seacoast. Other species have been in cultivation for a long time. Centuries ago, before the advent of the "modern rose," it was these wild species which were grown and ap-

preciated in gardens. The native cabbage rose of Europe, for instance, has been grown for over two thousand years. At one time it was used a great deal in Greek garlands, and later played a prominent part in the social festivities of the Romans. Certainly such a rose, rich in historical background, might well find a place in our modern garden if for nothing else than sentiment alone!

Many of the rose species are far more hardy than the commonly grown hybrids. Gardeners living in the northern United States and Canada should remember this for it means less care and less winter protection. Also, the wild species are less susceptible to insect pests and disease troubles; and this means less dusting, spraying and pruning, important factors in keeping any garden looking at its best. It is these plants which require less care that should be more commonly grown, in order to reduce maintenance drudgery.

A formal rose garden is beautiful when the roses are in bloom. Many of the rose species, however, are valuable in the landscape because they are attractive at more than one season of the year. A species like the Virginia rose is of interest at every season of the year—in late spring and early summer when the light pink flowers appear, all through summer because of the shining dark green leaves, in the fall with its red fruits and beautiful orange autumn color, and in the winter because the red twigs and persistent fruits are bright colored throughout the cold season. It is such plants—those that are of interest at more than one season—that should be more commonly grown regardless of whether they are roses or dogwoods.

Of importance is the fact that these rose species are hardy shrubs and as such can be grown with other shrubs in the border or even in foundation plantings when desirable. Many of the hybrid varieties, so popular in formal rose gardens, cannot be so used, but most of the species can. They add variety and interest when planted with any group of shrubs, for their flowers, fruits and foliage, and frequently their twigs are unusual, and thus contribute to the landscape features.

There are many other reasons why rose species should be more commonly grown, but the points above made are sufficient to start a train of thought in the right direction. With these ideas in mind, then, let us examine a list of twenty-four rose species which have been selected for their wide variety in size and shape, color of their flowers, and also because of their wide adaptability for various landscape uses. This list does not contain all of the best forms but is merely offered to show the wide range of plants available, and in the hope that it will stimulate horticulturists to give this group of plants more



PLATE V

The Virginia rose (*Rosa virginiana*) as it grows in a border planting
at the Arnold Arboretum.

attention. It is unnecessary to enumerate the merits of all these roses; consequently, only a few of the more outstanding are discussed in the following short paragraphs:

Rosa centifolia, the cabbage rose, has been mentioned in literature from as early as 270 B.C. It was one of the first wild roses introduced into cultivation and derives its name from the fact that its flowers were supposed to have one hundred petals. Being one of the few species with double flowers, several distinct varieties have evolved, one in particular designated as var. *mucosa*. This is the moss rose, so called because of the glandular moss-like excrescences of the sepals and flower-stalks. Many beautiful derivatives or selections have come down through the years from the moss rose, and even today it is one of the most interesting of roses in the older gardens.

Rosa damascena, the damask rose, another double flowering species, is a native of Asia Minor, and its pale pink to red flowers are very fragrant. It is one of the parents of the large class of hybrids called hybrid perpetuals. It was this rose that the early European hybridists started with and crossed in so many ways. It was probably grown in Gaul (France) and England by the early Romans. There is a variety called *versicolor*, which is credited as being the true York and Lancaster rose, and its history is interesting.

In 1455, Henry VI of the House of Lancaster was the ruler of all England. However, the Duke of York, head of the House of York, felt he should be ruler instead, and as a consequence a long and bitter war commenced, known as the war of the Roses which lasted until 1485. Those members of the House of Lancaster, and others loyal to it, selected the semi-double dark red *Rosa gallica*, or French rose, as their badge. Members of the House of York and its followers selected the white *Rosa alba* as their particular flower. As a result of long fighting, the throne passed between the two families until 1485, when Henry VII of the House of Lancaster was eventually proclaimed king. He married an heiress of the House of York in order to avert hard feelings, and shortly a new rose appeared. On the same bush grew red flowers and pure white flowers and some that where both red and white. This is supposed to have been *Rosa damascena versicolor*, or the York and Lancaster rose, symbolic of the final union of the House of Lancaster and the House of York. It is of interest to note in this connection that in the true York and Lancaster rose, the variegated flowers have white or red (or pink) petals and are not striped. Sometimes the striped flowers of *R. gallica versicolor* are assumed to represent the true York and Lancaster rose, but this is incorrect.

Rose Species for Landscape Use

<i>Botanical Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Single or Double</i>	<i>Color</i>
<i>R. bella</i>	¹ Solitary Rose	S	bright rose
<i>R. blanda</i>	³ Meadow Rose	S	rosy pink
<i>R. canina</i>	² Dog Rose	S	white to light pink
<i>R. centifolia</i>	² Cabbage Rose	D	red
<i>R. cinnamomema</i>	^{1 2} Cinnamon Rose	S	purplish red
<i>R. damascena</i>	² Damask Rose	D	pale pink to red
<i>R. eglanteria</i>	² Sweetbrier Rose	S	pale pink
<i>R. foetida</i>	¹ Austrian Brier Rose	S	deep yellow
<i>R. gallica</i>	² French Rose	S	dark red
<i>R. helenae</i>	¹ Helen Rose	S	white
<i>R. hugonis</i>	¹ Father Hugo's Rose	S	yellow
<i>R. moyesi</i>	¹ Moyes Rose	S	dark red
<i>R. multiflora</i>	¹ Japanese Rose	S	white
<i>R. omeiensis</i>	¹ Mount Omei Rose	S	white
<i>R. palustris</i>	³ Swamp Rose	S	pink
<i>R. primula</i>	¹ Primrose Rose	S	yellow
<i>R. rubrifolia</i>	² Redleaf Rose	S	deep red
<i>R. rugosa</i>	¹ Rugosa Rose	S	purplish red
<i>R. setigera</i>	³ Prairie Rose	S	deep rose
<i>R. spinosissima</i>	^{1 2} Scotch Rose	S	white to pale pink
<i>R. virginiana</i>	³ Virginia Rose	S	pink
<i>R. wichuraiana</i>	¹ Memorial Rose	S	white
<i>R. willmottiae</i>	¹ Willmott Rose	S	rose purple
<i>R. xanthina</i>	¹ Korean Rose	S and D	yellow

¹Native of China, Korea or Japan

²Native of Europe

³Native of North America

There are several yellow roses in the list, the hardiest of which is *R. hugonis* (Father Hugo's). This rose is a sturdy plant, a vigorous grower producing bright yellow single flowers in late May. It is reported that in some sections of Westchester County, N. Y., this rose is susceptible to a certain stem canker; but where this disease is not prevalent, Father Hugo's rose can be considered as one of the hardiest and earliest of all. The Persian Yellow rose, *R. foetida persiana*, might also be added for it is a beautiful rose with double flowers that are a deeper golden yellow color than Harison's yellow.

Rosa primula, another single yellow rose is just as early in bloom and is as hardy as *R. hugonis*. Splendid plants of this rose are growing in the Arboretum and are now about six feet tall. It would be an excellent substitute for Father Hugo's rose in situations where the latter is susceptible to canker.

Rosa harisoni is really not a wild species but a hybrid, originated by the Reverend Harison of Trinity Church in New York about 1830. It is mentioned here because it is the most common of yellow roses. At one time it was considered to be a variety of *R. foetida*; actually it is a cross between *R. foetida* and *R. spinosissima*.

The Japanese rose, *R. multiflora*, was first introduced into the United States before 1868. It is covered with small, pure white flowers in early June. With wide arching branches, vigorous growth, and bright red fruits which remain on the plant a greater part of the winter, the Japanese rose has been used considerably as one of the parents of the rambler roses; and, in fact, one of its varieties (*carnea*), first coming to England from China in 1804, had double red flowers.

The redleaf rose (*R. rubrifolia*) is outstanding among other shrubs because of its dark reddish foliage. It blends with green foliage extremely well, and should be classed with *Eleagnus angustifolia* as one of the really good foliage plants that can be used for modifying an unbroken line of green when desirable.

It is impossible to say too much in favor of the "sea tomato" of Japan, *Rosa rugosa*. It is widely planted in the eastern United States and has become naturalized in various places. It grows vigorously within reach of salt water spray, and survived a complete submergence under salt water as the result of the New England hurricane of September, 1938. Several varieties are available with single or double flowers. The fruits are large and beautiful in the fall and the foliage takes on an orange color—one of its chief merits for fall use. It is well adapted for use in hedges and as barriers, and is not subject to serious diseases.

Probably one of the best of the North American roses from the landscape point of view is *Rosa setigera*. It grows from six to twelve feet high, with wide-arching, thorny branches, and is covered with pink blossoms in the early summer. This is the last of the rose species to bloom, and should be used only in situations where it can run rampant, unrestrained by too much pruning.

The Scotch rose, *R. spinosissima*, is the most widely distributed rose in the world, being found from the British Isles to Japan. Incidentally, it is the only rose native of Iceland. Growing about four feet tall, it makes a dense, compact thorny mass of stems and foliage. The prickles are straight and of different lengths but very pronounced. The flowers are normally single and vary from white to pale pink, although forms or varieties occur even with red flowers, and double-flowered forms are known, while one variety (*lutea*) has yellow flowers.

Much could be written about the rose species given in the accompanying list and others not included therein. It is urged that gardeners study these plants and select a few for inclusion in the garden. They bring interest and color everywhere, and afford a close connection with the horticulture of past centuries.

DONALD WYMAN

REHDER'S MANUAL OF CULTIVATED TREES AND SHRUBS

A second edition of this work¹ first published in 1927 has just been issued. It has been brought up to date by the addition of numerous new introductions, the inclusion of the results of recent studies of certain groups, and the revision of the botanical names in conformity with the decisions of the last International Botanical Congress. The number of species fully described and mentioned in the keys has increased from 2350 to 2535 and of varieties from 2465 to 2685; the number of species and hybrids only briefly described has increased accordingly. Some genera, as *Rosa*, have been entirely rearranged, and in *Rhododendron* the number of species fully described has increased from 62 to 86. The general use of the term var. for all subdivisions of the species has been given up and the names are cited as trinomials with the author's name followed by the exact rank of the subdivision (subspecies, variety, form, *lusus*) as given by the original author of the combination. This will satisfy both the horticulturist and the systematic botanist. The zones of hardiness have been reduced from eight to seven and the small map of the climatic zones in the first edition has been replaced by a full page size map with the zones clearly indicated in color. The explanation of author's names, restricted in the old edition only to abbreviations of less than 500 names, contains now about 1250 entries with full names, dates, and country. The index of plant names contains over 14,400 names cited in the book.

¹Rehder, Alfred, *MANUAL OF CULTIVATED TREES AND SHRUBS* hardy in North America exclusive of the subtropical and warmer temperate regions. Second edition revised and enlarged. XXX. 996 pp. map O. Macmillan Co., New York, 1940. Price \$10.50